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To Branny, Cotta, Labienus and the pin cushions, with grateful thanks.

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## PREFACE

This is a no nonsense Latin text book. No frills, not many pictures, and definitely no word searches. Learning Latin is not the easiest thing you could choose to do. In fact, some of you will find it devilishly difficult. But it *can* be done and you will just have to accept the fact that it involves a good memory and loads of discipline.

In this book, things that have to be learnt are on the left-hand pages; things that have to be done are on the right. As you learn something on the left, you practise it on the right. Simple, isn't it? If you can cope with this lot, Books II and III will take you all the way up to GCSE level.

It has to be said that you won't be able to tell the time in Latin, or sing a comic song. But you will have bashed up a couple of hundred thousand Gauls with arrows, and prepared a good many tables for the master. What's more, your brain will have done so many mental somersaults and press-ups that you will find anything else you turn to laughably easy by comparison.

N.R.R.O.

April 1999



## GUIDE TO PRONUNCIATION

### Vowels

The main problem with learning to pronounce Latin correctly is the vowels. The Romans, as Asterix is always telling us, were crazy and they pronounced their vowels as follows:

ă (short)	as in cup	ā (long)	as in calf
ĕ (short)	as in set	ē (long)	as in stair
ĭ (short)	as in bit	ī (long)	as in bee
ŏ (short)	as in lot	ō (long)	as in the French <i>beau</i>
ŭ (short)	as in put	ū (long)	as in route

In this book, *long* vowels are marked with a macron (ā, ē, ī, ō, ū). If they are *not* marked, they are short. Occasionally a short vowel is marked as short (ă, ĕ, ĭ, ŏ, ŭ) if there is an incorrect tendency to pronounce the vowel long. For example the o in the Latin word *egō* is marked as short because so many people pronounce the word as if it were long.

Just occasionally a vowel may be marked as being both long *and* short. This is where a vowel is known to have been pronounced long in some places but short in others. In this book, for example, you will come across the words *quandō* and *homō*, the final ‘o’s of which are sometimes pronounced long, sometimes short. You will also find *ubī* and *ibī*, the final ‘i’s of which may be either long or short.

A vowel is regularly pronounced long when followed by *ns* or *nf*. This rule even applies to the word in when this is followed by a word starting with *s* or *f*. E.g. *in agrō* but *in silvā*.

### Diphthongs

Where two vowels are pronounced as *one* sound (as in the English *boil*, or *wait*), this is called a **diphthong** and the resulting syllable will always be long. For example the *-ae* of the word *mēnsae* is a diphthong. Diphthongs, because they are always long, are not marked with a macron.

The most common diphthongs are:

ae	as in eye	au	as in now
----	-----------	----	-----------

but you may also find:

ei	as in reign	oe	as in boil
ui	as in French <i>oui</i>	eu	as in e and u said in one breath!

### Vowel and syllable length

You need to learn the quantity of a *vowel* (i.e. whether it is long or short) to ensure that you pronounce the word correctly. But you also need to know the length of the *syllable* that the vowel is in. This is because Latin poetry was based on the subtle combination of long and short syllables.

---



I don't want to put you off before you even start, but you should know that there is a difference between marking a vowel as long or short and saying that the syllable itself is long or short. A syllable is long:

- (a) if it contains a long vowel; or
- (b) if it contains a vowel followed by two consonants.

For the purposes of this rule, x and z count as double consonants as does the consonant i (see below) where this comes between two vowels (see Appendix on page 101).

## Consonants

- C is always 'hard' as in cot, never 'soft' as in century.
- R is always rolled.
- S is always 's' as in bus, never 'z' as in busy.
- V is pronounced as a W.
- GN is pronounced NGN, as in hangnail.
- Latin has no letter J. The Romans used i as a consonant instead (thus Iūlius Caesar, pronounced Yulius).
- M, at the end of a word, was nasalised and reduced (i.e. only partially pronounced).

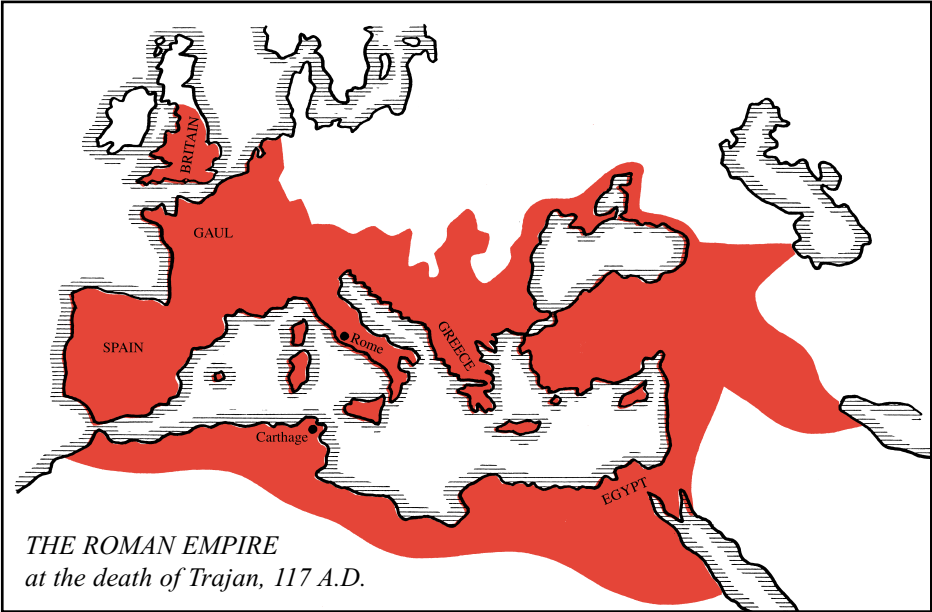
## Stress

Just as in English we have a particular way of stressing words, so they did in Latin. We, for example, say *potáto* (with the stress on the a). When we learn English words, we automatically learn how to stress them. This would have been the same for the Romans, learning Latin words.

The Romans worked out how to stress a word by looking at its penultimate syllable. Syllables, as we have seen, are either long or short. They are long if they contain a long vowel, or if they contain a short vowel followed by two consonants. They are short if they contain a short vowel which is *not* followed by two consonants. Using this information, a Latin word should be stressed as follows:

- The final syllable of a word should never be stressed (e.g. *ámō*, *ámās*, *ámat*, etc.)
- In a word of more than two syllables, if the penultimate syllable is long, stress it (e.g. *amátis* is stressed *amátis*; *amāvístis*\* is stressed *amāvístis*).
- If the penultimate syllable is short, stress the one before it (e.g. *regítis* is stressed *régitis*).

\* Note how the penultimate syllable of *amāvístis* is long because the i, although short, is followed by two consonants (st).



## INTRODUCTION

Latin was the language spoken by the ancient Romans. Because the Romans conquered so much of the world, Latin was spoken in several countries and for hundreds of years continued to be spoken and written, even after the Romans had gone. Gradually changes developed in the way Latin was used in each of these countries. In Italy, Latin became Italian; in France it became French; in Spain it became Spanish.

In Britain, Latin did not become the basis of the English language as it did for many of the other European languages. But with the arrival of the Normans in 1066, much of the old Anglo-Saxon language and customs was augmented by Norman (i.e. French) language and customs. The educated classes, the clergy and the new Norman officials who had come to rule Britain, used Latin, as they did on the continent, as the official written language of government. As a result a huge number of words of Latin origin passed into the English language.

The Romans ruled an empire which extended to most of modern Europe and beyond to Palestine, Egypt and north Africa. Their skill at engineering and construction was unmatched until the 20th century, and their form of administration, considering the size of their empire, was remarkable. But they could also be a cruel, bloodthirsty lot, who enjoyed watching animals being torn to bits in the arena, or gladiators fighting to the death with tridents.

We study Latin today for a number of reasons. It provides an excellent basis for learning language, both our own language and modern languages which are formed from Latin. It provides an excellent form of mental gymnastics, exercising our brains and training them to memorise, analyse and deduce. And of course it allows us to learn more about this remarkable people, to read their literature, enjoy their stories and thus come to appreciate the Romans who ruled the world for so many hundreds of years.

*Using Latin*

**sine quā nōn**

A sine quā nōn is something which is essential.  
In Latin sine quā nōn = without which not.

## CHAPTER I

### Verbs: the 1st conjugation

#### Verbs

Before we can begin in Latin, we need to understand how verbs work. The verb in a sentence tells us *what is happening*, and *who* is doing it. In Latin, verbs have a **stem**, which tells us what is happening, and an **ending**, which tells us who is doing it.

Verbs have three **persons**: 1st, 2nd and 3rd; and two **numbers**: singular and plural. The ending of the verb alters depending on the person and number of the verb. The person and number show us who is doing the verb.

#### Amō: present tense

The **tense** shows us *when* the verb is being done. In Latin there are six tenses. The first of these is the present tense, which tells us what is happening *now*.

The present tense of amō is as follows:

Amō = I love, I like		
1st person singular	<b>am-ō*</b>	I love
2nd person singular	<b>amā-s</b>	You (sing.) love
3rd person singular	<b>amā-t</b>	He, she or it loves
1st person plural	<b>amā-mus</b>	We love
2nd person plural	<b>amā-tis</b>	You (pl.) love
3rd person plural	<b>amā-nt</b>	They love

\*The present stem of amō is amā-. The present tense endings are -ō, -s, -t, -mus, -tis, and -nt. In the first person singular the stem of verbs like amō contracts from amā- to am-, but it quickly recovers the missing ā and is rarely to be seen without it again.

N.B. the present tense in English can be *love*, *am loving* or *do love*.

#### Verbs like amō

Verbs are divided into four main groups called **conjugations**. Verbs of the 1st conjugation go like amō. Thus cantō = I sing (present stem cantā-), and aedificō = I build (present stem = aedificā-), go:

cant-ō	I sing	aedific-ō	I build
cantā-s	You sing	aedificā-s	You build
cantā-t	He, she, it sings	aedifica-t	He, she, it builds
cantā-mus	We sing	aedificā-mus	We build
cantā-tis	You sing	aedificā-tis	You build
cantā-nt	They sing	aedifica-nt	They build

*So you really want to learn Latin...*

**Exercise 1. 1**

Study the information on the left-hand page. Notice how *cantō* and *aedificō*, written out in the present tense, use exactly the same endings as *amō*. All 1st conjugation verbs copy *amō* in this way. N.B. The hyphen between the stem and the endings is only given on the left-hand page to help you recognise the two parts of the word. You do not need to use hyphens in the exercises that follow. Now write out the present tense of the following verbs, *together with their meanings*:

- |                           |                             |
|---------------------------|-----------------------------|
| 1. <i>vocō</i> = I call   | 3. <i>festinō</i> = I hurry |
| 2. <i>nāvigō</i> = I sail | 4. <i>labōrō</i> = I work   |

**Exercise 1. 2**

Make a note of the seven Latin verbs you have met so far, with their meanings (e.g. *aedificō* = I build, etc.). Note how the present tense of *amō* can mean *I love*, *am loving* or *do love*. Then translate into Latin:

- |                            |                    |
|----------------------------|--------------------|
| 1. I am loving             | 6. You (pl.) like  |
| 2. You (sing.) are sailing | 7. We sing         |
| 3. They are hurrying       | 8. It sails        |
| 4. He does sail            | 9. You (pl.) build |
| 5. She is calling          | 10. He is singing  |

**Exercise 1. 3**

Translate into English. Each Latin word has three possible English translations (e.g. *I love*, *am loving* or *do love*). Use whichever one you wish.

- |                      |                      |
|----------------------|----------------------|
| 1. <i>cantat</i>     | 6. <i>festinātis</i> |
| 2. <i>amās</i>       | 7. <i>festinās</i>   |
| 3. <i>nāvigās</i>    | 8. <i>aedificō</i>   |
| 4. <i>vocātis</i>    | 9. <i>cantās</i>     |
| 5. <i>aedificant</i> | 10. <i>vocat</i>     |

**Exercise 1. 4**

Translate into Latin:

- |                    |                              |
|--------------------|------------------------------|
| 1. We are building | 6. I do love                 |
| 2. They do sing    | 7. You (pl.) do call         |
| 3. She is hurrying | 8. He does sail              |
| 4. They sail       | 9. We call                   |
| 5. We are working  | 10. You (sing.) are hurrying |

*Using Latin*

**N.B.**

The letters N.B. stand for *notā bene* = note well!

### The future tense

So far we have only used the present tense, telling us what is happening *now*. But if we want to know what *will* or *shall* happen in the future, we need to use the future tense, sometimes called the future simple tense. The future tense of *amō* is set out below. Note how the endings are added to the present stem (*amā-*) which you met earlier.

<i>amā-bō</i>	I shall love / will love
<i>amā-bis</i>	You (sing.) will love
<i>amā-bit</i>	He, she, it will love
<i>amā-bimus</i>	We shall love / will love
<i>amā-bitis</i>	You (pl.) will love
<i>amā-bunt</i>	They will love

### The imperfect tense

The imperfect tense refers to a continuous action in the past. Thus, if we wish to know what *was happening* or *used to happen* in the past, we use the imperfect tense. Again, all we do is add a different set of endings to our old friend the present stem (*amā-*):

<i>amā-bam</i>	I was loving, used to love
<i>amā-bās</i>	You (sing.) were loving
<i>amā-bat</i>	He, she, it was loving
<i>amā-bāmus</i>	We were loving
<i>amā-bātis</i>	You (pl.) were loving
<i>amā-bant</i>	They were loving

### And, but, not

Verbs may be joined by the conjunctions *et* = ‘and’ or ‘sed’ = ‘but’. Thus:

*amat et cantat* = he loves and sings.

They may be made negative by using the adverb *nōn* = ‘not’, which is always placed *before* the verb, not after it. Thus: *nōn amat* = he does not love.

### Vocabulary 1

Verbs				Adverb	
<i>aedificō</i>	I build	<i>oppugnō</i>	I attack (a city)	<i>nōn</i>	not
<i>amō</i>	I love, like	<i>parō</i>	I prepare	Conjunctions	
<i>cantō</i>	I sing	<i>pugnō</i>	I fight	<i>et</i>	and
<i>expectō</i>	I wait (for)	<i>rogō</i>	I ask	<i>sed</i>	but
<i>festinō</i>	I hurry	<i>spectō</i>	I watch		
<i>labōrō</i>	I work	<i>superō</i>	I overcome		
<i>nāvigō</i>	I sail	<i>vocō</i>	I call		

*So you really want to learn Latin...*